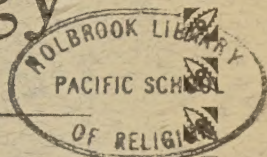


# The Indian Journal of Theology



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A few copies of Dr. J. F. Butler's article on *The Theology of Church Building in India* are available from Mr. Mathew P. John, Serampore College, West Bengal (Price Annas Twelve or Seventy-five Naye Paise).



# Radhakrishnan's and Brunner's Anthropologies: a Comparison

K. C. MATHEW

## II

### THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM

Man's freedom, according to Radhakrishnan, consists in maintaining his true nature as Spirit. Man is an active participant in the cosmic process of the return of things to God. He can either co-operate, in His creative work, with the Divine, Who dwells in his inmost being, or turn away from Him. Free individuals are those who have resolved the dualism between the Divine and the human and have become identified with the Divine in His creative work.<sup>1</sup> They are integrated individuals who have organized their activities in terms of this ideal. This integration differs from person to person. When all aspects of man are organized in terms of one particular purpose, namely, the realization of one's unity with the Divine in him, one attains the maximum degree of integration and freedom. The more one integrates one's life the more free does one become.<sup>2</sup> In short, integration is freedom. This identification of integration and freedom is a good example of Radhakrishnan's synthesis. He has poured into the old bottle of Hindu thought the new wine of an essential element of the Berdyaevian type of existentialism.<sup>3</sup>

Man attains complete freedom when his self becomes 'co-extensive with the whole'. This is salvation or liberation or *Moksa*. It is a state in which self-consciousness is displaced by God-consciousness; individuality by universality.

Spiritual freedom consists in the transformation of one's whole nature and not in the escape of the immortal spirit from the mortal human life.<sup>4</sup> His body, life and mind are not dissolved but are transformed and have become transparent to the divine light. He is released from divided loyalties and actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagvadgita*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Berdyaev describes integrated personality as one 'in which the Spiritual principle has mastery over all his other powers, both mental and physical. The unification of personality is created by the Spirit' (*Slavery and Freedom*, p. 278).

<sup>4</sup> Radhakrishnan, 'Fragments of a Confession' (in *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, p. 61).

He works in a freedom of spirit and an inner joy and peace which are independent of external sources. This is a close parallel to what Sri Aurobindo means by 'integral transformation'.<sup>1</sup>

The key to the understanding of Brunner's concept of freedom is his doctrine of *Imago Dei*. He claims that freedom belongs to the context of God-relation. Man is free when he stands in right relation to God which is the same as dependence on God. Therefore the maximum of dependence on God is the maximum of freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Human freedom is conditioned freedom in contrast to the absolute freedom of God. If man fails to respond to the call of God, he loses his original freedom. The actual man by failing to respond to the call of God has fallen from his original freedom to 'unfreedom'.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that all freedom has been lost. Man does not cease to be a subject. Even in the fallen state man's existence is based on decision.<sup>4</sup> The Fall does not destroy the free will. The unfreedom into which man has fallen through sin is unfreedom in freedom.

By unfreedom Brunner means that the breach with God is irreparable by man. Man is no longer free to regain his original freedom which he lost through sin. Augustine's celebrated formula, *non posse non peccare*, well describes this unfreedom of fallen man. No amount of work on the part of man can break the barrier of *non posse non peccare*.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the most crucial question facing man is how can he regain his lost original freedom. He can close the door to it, but he cannot open the door he has already closed. Without outside help he is lost for ever. The only answer to this problem of man, according to Brunner, is the forgiving act of God—Jesus Christ who imparts to man through faith his lost freedom.<sup>6</sup> It is in faith that man is truly free.

The problem of free will is not the problem of freedom for both Radhakrishnan and Brunner. They do not deny free will. There is a different kind of freedom for both—the freedom to be that for which God created man. It is the evolutionary goal for Radhakrishnan. But Brunner holds that it is something lost through the Fall and to be regained. They disagree completely as to the method of realizing this freedom. Radhakrishnan's man

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<sup>1</sup> Another contemporary Indian exponent of the same idea is Aurobindo Ghose. His favourite expression is 'integral transformation' which 'includes a taking up of that which is lower into higher values; the divine or spiritual life will not only assume into itself the mental, vital, physical life transformed and spiritualized, but it will give them a much wider and fuller play than was open to them so long as they were living on their own level' (Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 649).

<sup>2</sup> Brunner, *Christianity and Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Brunner, *The Divine Human Encounter*, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Brunner, *The Word and the World*, pp. 52-53.



attains spiritual freedom through his own work—self-realization. But Brunner's man is dependent on the Act of God in which God alone has the initiative. It is offered to man as a gift and is received in faith.

Radhakrishnan conceives freedom in ontological terms. It is a state to which man evolves. But Brunner conceives of it in existential terms. To be free from him is not a condition or state but an act. The locus of freedom for the former is the spirit and for the latter it is God-relation. Man is spirit, according to Brunner, only in that he is addressed by God. In this 'address and answer' relationship lies the mystery of human freedom.<sup>1</sup> Man has to maintain this freedom by a moment by moment act of faith and it can be lost by unbelief. But Radhakrishnan's man never loses his spiritual freedom, once it is realized.

In this connection a word ought to be added about Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the doctrine of *Karma* which is an answer to the charge that *Karma* makes man a plaything of fate or a driftwood moved hither and thither by the tide of uncontrolled events. If man is a complete victim of *Karma* and he cannot alter in any way its course of action, then he is a helpless sufferer of the results of his past deeds. Against this view Radhakrishnan maintains the freedom of man to shape his own life. His illustration of the game of bridge shows that there is both determinism and indeterminism in the game of life.<sup>2</sup> Each man is as free as the bridge player to make the most of the given 'cards' of life and shape wisely his future life. If this were not possible, human consciousness would be a useless luxury.

In the game of life what Radhakrishnan's man needs is the knowledge of the good. This knowledge one gains through the saints who are transparent to the Divine in them.<sup>3</sup> Thus he becomes aware of what he potentially is and he begins to work for the realization of the possibilities latent in him. When the last possibility is realized, he becomes free from the law of *Karma*.

Brunner would not accept the basic assumptions of Radhakrishnan in the above interpretation of the law of *Karma*. Radhakrishnan apparently assumes that the deeds and not the doer are bad. For Brunner both the deeds and the doer are bad. It is the doer who had broken his relationship with God and stands in opposition to Him.

Radhakrishnan's next assumption is that man has the power to realize the good. The Spirit holds out the good as a possibility and man brings the good into being. Brunner, on the other hand, denies man this power to realize the good. God has to realize it for him and man receives it from God as a gift through

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<sup>1</sup> Brunner, *God and Man*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Radhakrishnan, *The Idealist View of Life*, p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> Radhakrishnan, 'Fragments of a Confession', pp. 64-65.

faith. In faith man becomes that for which he is created. He is freed from the conflict between the *is* and the *ought*. In faith he is a free man.

## HISTORY

Radhakrishnan, like all philosophers of history, is faced with the difficult question whether or not the universe is a sphere of meaningful activity. He rejects the answers of naturalism and 'eternalism'. Naturalism, at best, is only a method of interpreting the universe and not a philosophy of history. 'Eternalism'<sup>1</sup> makes history meaningless because it offers no ground for its existence.

He thinks that his idealism gives the best answer for the problem. An idealist view finds that the world has meaning or value. The cosmic process is regarded as a movement with a goal and a destination.<sup>2</sup> This goal is the consummation of the evolution of the Spirit. It is the transformation of all matter into Spirit and the disappearance of the dualism between the subject and the object.

The temporal is between two eternities. The beginning and end of the temporal are beyond time. Therefore history is an intermediate stage. But the end is not the destruction of history but its fulfilment. It is the transformation of the temporal into the eternal.

Brunner also conceives time as having a beginning and an end. What happens between the two points is real and significant even for God. His intervention in time at a certain point in the shape of an historical person is the proof that He is interested in it.<sup>3</sup> This event has charged time with immense significance because it has changed the time of man's history into one of waiting and of decision. It summons man to an unconditional decision, which decides everything else. Every moment is a moment of decision. Time, however, is not the ultimate reality, it is only an intermezzo between divine election in the beginning and the final perfection of history beyond time.<sup>4</sup> History is thus a movement with a direction and a goal. The goal is not something which happens in history, but something which happens beyond history—another intervention of God similar to that of the first one. This is what is meant by *parousia*.

Therefore, the goal of history is not reached by an immanent growth or progress, but by a revolutionary change of the human situation at the end of history. He denies the idea of a kingdom

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<sup>1</sup> This word is coined to distinguish Radhakrishnan's idealism from that which stresses the eternal in such a way as to make the temporal illusory.

<sup>2</sup> Radhakrishnan's 'Fragments of a Confession', p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Brunner, *Christianity and Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.



of God developing according to the view of progress from below upwards. This does not mean that he rejects the growth, progress, enlargement and enrichment of the life of a Christian. Nor does he reject the importance of the spreading of the Christian community. The relation of the historical process to the coming Kingdom is dialectical.

Brunner's negation of history is at the same time its affirmation. He says that eternal life is not only the negation but also the fulfilment of this earthly life. Resurrection to eternal life is the fulfilment of the individual personal aspect of human life, whereas the kingdom of God is the fulfilment of human history. This fulfilment of history is an event beyond history and is realized by destroying the structure of the historical.

Radhakrishnan starts with the Absolute, and winds up with the Absolute. The beginning and the end are the same. So his view of history is cyclical. Brunner emphatically denies the cyclical view of history. But, in the last analysis, his view also is cyclical in the sense that the beginning and the end are the same. He starts with God. The historical is the creation of God out of nothing. The end of history is the destruction of the structure of the historical by bursting the framework of space and time. He himself admits that what remains is what has broken into history—agape.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the beginning and the end are the same. This is the logical conclusion of his dialectical premise and the assertion that the fulfilment of history is beyond history. The other conclusion is one which he accepts by faith and calls it conveniently a paradox.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Radhakrishnan's view of the individual and society is indissolubly linked to his concept of evolution. Individuality is not anything evil in itself. The evolving spirit expresses itself at the human level as self-conscious individuals. But individuality should grow into universality<sup>2</sup>—the next level of evolution. But this should not be confused with the negative method of asceticism, which according to him is not part of true Hinduism. He claims that the true Hindu ideal is growth into spiritual freedom by developing each side of the individual life until it transcends its limits. Thus individuality is related to universality or super-individuality in a positive way.

This is the criterion by which he judges whether or not a social organization has any justification for its existence. The primary function of society is to assist the individuals in their spiritual growth and to help them to think, feel and adore as they choose without constraint of oppressive laws and customs. He is unalterably opposed to any social organization—religious or

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<sup>1</sup> Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 383.

secular—which makes its claims ultimate and suppresses individual action and initiative.<sup>1</sup>

He has a strong belief in the dignity of human individuals. Even the humblest individual has the spark of the Spirit in him which even the mightiest empire cannot crush. It is this belief in the dignity and uniqueness of the individual that led him to denounce the caste system—an essential element of popular Hinduism—as an instrument of oppression and intolerance.

In the case of Brunner also it is the nature of man that determines his attitude towards society. In sin as well as faith man is both an individual person and humanity as a whole. It is his existence in this dialectical dimension that makes man man. Thus his personalism is bound up with a radical universalism. He claims that only such a view of man can avoid both individualism and collectivism.<sup>2</sup> The function of social organizations is to safeguard the dignity of individual persons and the unity of mankind.<sup>3</sup>

He complains rightly that even empirical Christianity has failed to maintain the unity of the truly personal and the truly communal.<sup>4</sup> He does not accept the Church as a mysterious entity above the individual to which he may be sacrificed. An institution exists only as embodied in individuals.

Brunner's chief criticism of Radhakrishnan in this connection would be that his view of man fails to maintain the unity of the truly personal and the truly communal. But this concept is not wholly absent in Radhakrishnan's system. His man is a vessel for the expression of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> He is also a self-conscious individual. He is universal in that all men are the expressions of the same Spirit. This Radhakrishnan's man is both individual and universal. This unity, however, is causal, whereas the unity of Brunner's man is existential.

The three-fold discipline of human life, as interpreted by Radhakrishnan, shows that man is not an abstract-individual. By virtue of his character, behaviour and function in society he belongs to a particular social group. The variety of spiritual expression determines the empirical variety of human nature.<sup>6</sup> The function of any social structure is to make this variety work with efficiency. He is opposed to the conception of society in which all are proletarians with no vocations but jobs. Variety and uniformity is the principle of society. He rejects totalitarianisms, both religious and political, which reduce human beings to mere puppets responding to the dictates of the leaders.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Recovery of Faith*, pp. 62, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Brunner, *Christianity and Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Radhakrishnan, 'The Ancient Asian View of Man' (in *Man's Right to Knowledge*, p. 11).

<sup>6</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 357, 366.

<sup>7</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Recovery of Faith*, p. 72.



### SOME REMARKS

The philosophy of Radhakrishnan is a reinterpretation of *Advaita* with a view to providing philosophical and religious sanctions for the individual and social changes demanded from the Hindus by the rapidly changing conditions in modern India. Attempts in this direction by Radhakrishnan and other contemporary Hindu leaders have contributed immensely to bring about a 'silent' rather than a 'violent' social change in New India.

The chief contribution of Radhakrishnan to Indian philosophy through his reinterpretation of *Advaita* consists in relating the world positively to the Absolute. He has shown, in contrast to many orthodox *Advaitins*, that the Absolute can be reached positively. This provides the basis for his contention that the material values are not to be destroyed but to be transformed into spiritual values. He conceives in terms of this basic idea a universal and not individualistic goal for human life. Thus he has attempted to rid Hinduism of the rigid individualism characteristic of extreme asceticism. Following the lead of Sankara and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism he finds work in this world even for the freed souls. Although they are not under the constraints of *Karma*, they work for the redemption of suffering creatures, because all are bound together in their onward march toward their spiritual home. The liberated souls retain their individualities and work for the perfection of the rest of mankind, for no man is truly saved until all others are saved. Perfect freedom and perfect society emerge together.<sup>1</sup>

In his reinterpretation of *Advaita*, he has used ideas borrowed from other sources such as Christianity to breathe life into the 'dry bones' of ancient *Advaita* philosophy. This, however, does not imply that his philosophy is just a compilation of borrowed ideas from other sources. His genius and imagination are too great and rich to label him just a borrower from other sources. He has made such a creative synthesis of the essential concept of *Advaita*—*Tat tvam asi*—with the ideas taken from other sources that the final product is a living *Advaita* attractive not only to Indians but to people abroad. He goes so far as to think that his *Advaita* is the answer to the religious needs of the present-day mankind which is on the road to self-destruction. Today, this new *Advaita* is the greatest challenge to Christianity in India. This article can be regarded only as a feeble attempt to show how far Brunner's anthropology is able to meet this challenge. This kind of conversation between all important Christian and Hindu thinkers should be carried on so that an adequate Indian apologetics can evolve eventually from such studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan, *The Idealist View of Life*, p. 307.

# Christian and Non-Christian Faith

P. D. DEVANANDAN

In the life and witness of the Church there seems little concern today for proclaiming the Gospel to all men, for confronting men with the claims of Jesus Christ as the one hope of the world in these days of perplexing insecurity about human destiny and the prevailing confusion brought on by the collapse of culture and conflict of ideologies.

There are many reasons for this lack of evangelistic enthusiasm among us. One is that Christians seem to be pre-occupied with the more immediate need for consolidation; they are interested chiefly in husbanding their own resources and strengthening the fellowship of the Church that it may withstand contemporary forces which threaten its freedom and security.

Another reason is that all Christians do not adequately realize the challenge and relevancy of the Gospel for the times and the people of their day; they themselves need to experience the truth that in Jesus Christ alone is the one sure hope for the world.

A third reason, which has special bearing on Christians of the Younger Churches, is that they do not have a clear understanding of the relation of Christianity to other religions, of the Gospel to which they testify and the religions of the people among whom they live and work. As Christians of the third and fourth generation they are confused by the claims and counter-claims of non-Christians who now speak with a new assurance and conscious vitality.

## KRAEMER'S CONTRIBUTION AT TAMBARAM

The question of the Christian Message to the non-Christian world was brought to the fore at the Tambaram meeting of the International Missionary Council (1938) due in great measure to the stimulating book on that subject by Dr. Hendrik Kraemer. Further study was made in the first volume of the Tambaram Reports, entitled *The Authority of the Faith*, but since then, for various reasons, nothing more was done to continue the discussion. Efforts are now being made to revive interest in this study, especially since the Devos consultation (1956), and the publication of Kraemer's second book early this year.



What emerged at Tambaram has certainly influenced Christian thinking on the subject of non-Christian faiths and evangelism. For one thing, we have all come to appreciate the distinction which Dr. Kraemer then made between Christianity as an historical religion among other religions and the Gospel which is at the core of our creed. We see now that Biblical revelation is *sui generis*, in that it concerns God's initiative for the redemption of men in the person of Our Lord, and that as such it should not be confused with what is called 'revelation' in other religious thought.

Moreover, since every religion is a system of ideas and practices which together constitutes a whole, any 'relation' subsisting among them should be assessed in their totality as systems, and not in terms of a 'relation' established by comparison of particular ideas and practices isolated from the whole of which they form part.

Yet another factor entered into the discussion to which attention was drawn by Dr. A. G. Hogg. He pointed out that while there are non-Christian religious systems which we describe as other faiths there is also what may be called non-Christian faith, which is a very real fact to reckon with in the lives of devout individual adherents of other religions. It is to such faith that we are called to witness with conviction of the uniqueness and finality of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

The Christian attitude to other religions is one thing, and quite another thing is the relation of the faith in the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ whom we proclaim to the faith in God which is indeed the foundation of non-Christian belief. On the one hand, we may not compromise on the absoluteness of the Christian revelation in which alone is salvation for all men, and, on the other, we must indicate with sympathetic insight the significance of the redemptive power of the Gospel to the men of faith in all faiths, interpreting its claims as supremely challenging and relevant to the concrete problems of life which we meet in our world today.

### CHRISTIANITY AS ANOTHER RELIGION

'Empirical Christianity', the historical faith-system of ideas and practices, has grown through the centuries. It has developed in the process a characteristic theology, a distinctive ethic and an organized fellowship which worships together in local congregations according to a generally accepted order of faith. Every historical religion, in like manner, has its own specific creed, its cultus and its culture, all of which have taken centuries to shape into an interrelated, characteristic pattern. So that it would be unfair to any religion if we regarded, as by itself alone, any one idea or practice which is part of its creed, cultus and culture. This is a temptation to which many good religious people are subject, especially when they are anxious to effect a comparison

or establish a relation. This total nature of religion is specially marked in the case of modern 'substitute religions' such as Communism and Secularism.

To look, then, for difference or resemblance, we must take a total view of each historical religious system. The fundamental difference between Christianity and other religions, from this approach, is to be found in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In Him, God has disclosed His purpose for His world. In Him, He has declared His loving intention to forgive those who turn to Him in repentance for transgressing His will. Such forgiven sinners He reclaims as His children so that this entire creation may finally be transformed into a new heaven and a new earth.

This is the good news of the Kingdom of God as the ultimate destiny of world-life, the one sure hope for all mankind, declared in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Him 'the Word was made flesh'. The Gospel, thus, stands for something which God has done for man. About this 'doing' of God there is a once-for-allness which gives it a finality; because it is an incident in human history which surpasses any other it is unique; and because it is all of God and His doing there is about it a self-authentication which is of the nature of absolute truth.

When we say, then, that Jesus Christ is unique, that the Incarnation is final and that the Christian claim is to absolute truth, we are not merely referring to Jesus of Nazareth as a unique man among men; nor do we imply that through Him God has given a body of teachings which is, as it were, His final word about salvation; much less do we make pretence of claim to absolute truth for 'empirical Christianity,' for all that constitutes the Christian system of thought and practice, its creed, its cultus and its culture. What we do say is that God's revelation of His purpose for the world of men in Christ Jesus is unique, final and absolute. And it is this Gospel, this good news of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself that we preach. As Dr. Hogg has well put it, 'Christianity is unique because of the unique content of the revelation of which it is the apprehension and product, and to which it bears witness'.

#### UNIQUE CONTENT OF CHRISTIAN REVELATION

This implies that Christianity as system of ideas and practices has grown around this revelation, informed by it but nevertheless constructed by exercise of human thought and language interpreting the experience of this revelation. Christianity is never free from the danger of human error in its efforts to give form and expression to its essential Gospel-content.

So there is persistent need to be constantly checking up the creed, the cultus and the culture of the Christian religion with reference to the Gospel. God's gift of the Holy Spirit was given us with this intention, that He may teach us, leading us in the way of truth and setting us free from the natural human tendency to falsehood.



Evangelism is the two-fold movement of Christian faith, reaching out in testimony to the truth we have found in Christ and growing inward in experience of the truth that we have been found of God in Christ. For our religion comes as much under the judgement of the Gospel as any other religion.

Compared as a religion among religions, the divergence between Christianity and other faiths will strike the eye where its creed is concerned, for our creed seeks to formulate in conceptual expressions our understanding of the Gospel, and it is there, in the Gospel, that non-Christians will find the 'scandal', the totally unacceptable claims of Christianity.

But it is not impossible that, in the realms of culture and cultus, Christians in the lands of the Younger Churches find a measure of affinity with the non-Christian peoples among whom we live, of whom we form part. Nevertheless whatever we take over from other religions, whether of thought or practice, consciously or unconsciously, needs to be baptized into Christ, made over anew by the Gospel, so completely changed in meaning that it accords with the creed of our faith. Only thus can we avoid the persistent danger of syncretism, on the one hand, and the equally insidious evil of remaining alien in our life and unintelligible in our conversation as Christians with non-Christians.

#### NON-CHRISTIAN MEN OF FAITH

There are non-Christian men of faith whose profound religious experience commands our sincere reverence. It is not for us to say whether or not God has met and made known His loving purpose to them also, although in their seeking for God they have not been confronted by Christ. It may even be that they have, in fact, rejected His claims. It is difficult to hold that all non-Christian faith is purely a human quest for God, and that in all such 'seeking' there is no 'finding' or 'being found'.

A genuinely responsive condition of faith on the part of man in his quest for God cannot fail to find favour with Him. Therefore, we may not agree that there is no revelation of God at all except in Christianity. To quote Dr. Hogg again, 'Whether to Christian faith or non-Christian, God reveals Himself; He does not reveal ready-made truths about Himself. And the thought and language in which a man expresses to himself or others his apprehensions of that supernatural self-disclosure has to be human thought, human language always defective, sometimes gravely distorting'.

There is, however, one serious lack in all non-Christian faith: there is little of that amazing joy and sense of release which wells out of the stupendous awareness of sins forgiven. The reason is obvious. It is due to the characteristic background of non-Christian ideas, the peculiar meaning attributed to salvation, the whole perspective of non-Christian faith being conditioned by an altogether different view of life and human destiny.

Therefore, the primary task of evangelism in non-Christian countries is to challenge such faith in God which does not reckon with the fact of sin and consequent need for forgiveness, and not merely repudiate the validity of such faith. Only a shattering realization of human sinfulness and God's dealing with it in Jesus Christ can break down all barriers between God and man, establish anew that two-way commerce of love and of obedience between the Father and the Children of His adoption. So our Lord said, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me,' and again, 'Neither doth any man know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.'

Such experience, possible only in Christ, is revolutionary. It completely repatterns the whole background of ideas in non-Christian faith and furnishes a new standpoint from where the act of God in Christ acquires a new meaning. But does this mean that the faith in God of deeply religious men who are not convicted of sin and see no need for forgiveness is entirely unrelated to the faith of forgiven sinners, such as we Christians are, who have been restored to a sense of fellowship so devastatingly new that we can describe it only as a new creation?

### OUR EVANGELISTIC CONCERN

We may not forget that God Himself is at work to awaken men of faith in other religions too, teaching men to know and love Him as He is, the Father of our Lord Jesus. Where human apprehension of His mind and purpose is distorted, He too is patiently at work undoubtedly, 'enabling men to apprehend conceptually, without a radical degree of distortion, His perfect expression of Himself towards all men in the medium of action and personality'.

Christians of our generation need to hold to the trust in a Father God who yearns for fellowship with feeble men and that He is for ever eager to bestow on those who turn to Him the heritage of sonship, 'the privilege of the ages to come'. Besides it is true, as Dr. Kraemer observes in another context, 'not the consciousness of sin brings men to Christ, but the continued contact with Christ brings them to consciousness of sin'.

Our task is to bring these men of faith to confront the living Christ. And when He quickens them too, as He did most of us who began our spiritual pilgrimage from within the Church, to perceive the terrific reality of sin, nothing suffices but the Crucified Saviour and the Risen Lord.

Our evangelistic concern in men of non-Christian faith is given an added sense of urgency and responsibility in that we are in a real way labourers together with God. We need to exercise with greater courage and informed insight the prophetic ministry of courageously indicating in the concrete and actual situation of life the devastating effects of human sinfulness and self-righteousness and mistrust of God in our day.



We need to show how non-Christian faith in God is precariously based on doctrinal views of man and the world which do not reckon with realities, by confronting non-Christian ideas and practices with the truth as we know it in Jesus Christ. We need further to come closer together with men of non-Christian faith, and on the plane of living fellowship make them see for themselves in our own lives that blessedness whereunto 'the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'.

It may not be for us to say that God in His graciousness will not reward the faith of the non-Christian seeker who continues to stay outside the fold, but we press forward with the mission of testimony which has been delivered to us declaring to the end of time that there is no other Name given under heaven by which men shall be saved except the Name of Jesus Christ. For it remains true for all time that 'when Christ succeeds in unveiling for any man the judgement of God on sin, in this very act He cannot help making Himself for that man, the one and only way'.



*In India there have been prophets and teachers who have prepared the way for Christ, not in the sense that anything they have written refers prophetically to any particular word or deed of His, but in the sense that they have trained the people in noble ways of living and taught them by word and example receptiveness to the ministry of Jesus. The Rsis, Bhaktas and Yogins of India have striven hard to make the people respond to the summons of Christ when it is uttered. It may be asked in what sense the people of India have been prepared for the coming of Christ. There are many utterances of the seers in India which dwell upon the necessity for a teacher to lead and guide us. They point out that real progress in religion is possible only with the help of a spiritual teacher which is far more effective than reading. Though these utterances refer only to human teachers, their insistence on the necessity of personal guidance finds its highest fulfilment in the supreme religious teacher, Jesus Christ. . .*

*There are elements in the ancient Scriptures of India which have to be fearlessly given up. But there are also many doctrines and ideals in them which have to be as zealously assimilated and carried on to their natural culmination in Christ. If Jesus blamed His contemporaries for not listening to the voice of Moses, with equal power and vehemence will He condemn us for not listening to Rāmānuja, Māṇikkavācakar, Tukārām, Kabīr and Chaitanya who have left behind them teaching of such undying value, pointing the way to Christ.*

# The Use of Indian Music in Christian Worship

H. A. POPLEY

It seems to be rather strange and paradoxical to suggest that the Indian church needs to be reminded that the use of Indian music and Indian hymnology in Indian Christian worship is not only of great importance but should be regarded as an essential feature of Christian worship in India. Since the third century there has been a Christian church in India and the Roman church dates from the sixteenth century. During the past two centuries Protestant churches have been established in many regions of India. With such a long history it is strange to find Western music persisting throughout the Indian church. It seems to imply that the Indian church, whether Syrian or Roman or Protestant, has not yet become truly indigenous in India.

In the Syrian churches of Kerala Syriac was used in the liturgy of the Holy Qurbana until about 1835, and the priests used Syriac chants even though the words were not intelligible to the congregation. Since then, however, Malayalam has come into use in the liturgical services of the Jacobite and Mar Thoma churches, but Syriac chants are almost entirely used in these services. It must be remembered that Syriac is an Eastern language and the music is Eastern rather than Western and so is not so foreign as Western music is. In all the other services of the Syrian churches Malayalam songs are freely used and are sung to Indian tunes. The Western harmonium is not much used in Syrian churches, but Indian instruments are also absent.

In the Lutheran churches in most towns and in many villages Western hymns and tunes predominate. The early German and Swiss missionaries translated a great many Western hymns into the regional languages and taught the congregations to sing them. The Swiss missionaries especially taught their people to sing the hymns in Western harmony with a considerable measure of success. In many of the Anglican churches in both towns and villages the present tendency is for Western hymns and tunes to predominate and the psalms and canticles are often sung to Western chants, which results in a most unmusical medley of language and music. In the non-Anglican churches, while in the town churches Western hymn translations are largely used, in



most of the rural churches Indian lyrics, that is songs set to Indian metres, are most frequently sung and in many places one almost invariably finds these. Unless, however, there is a good singer and someone who knows a little of Indian music in the village, they are often very badly sung.

One of the governing principles of the Church of South India when it was formed in 1947 is the following, as found in the Constitution :

‘The Church of South India desires, therefore, conserving all that is of spiritual value in its Indian heritage, to express under Indian conditions and in Indian forms the thought and the life of the Church universal’ (p. 3).

This article of the Constitution has neither been widely publicized nor generally implemented in the forms of Christian worship in most of the Dioceses. In Tamilnad there has been a general tendency to the Anglicanization of the forms of church worship, especially in the town churches, which has led to the singing of the canticles and psalms to Western chants and to the predominance of the harmonium and of Western hymns in the services. It is very unfortunate that the Western harmonium is now being largely used for the playing of the Indian lyrics as well of the Western hymns.

In the Tirunelveli Diocese Western music is found in all the congregations, whether urban or rural, and in the towns it is predominant. In the village churches, where Indian lyrics are used to a considerable extent, they are often sung very badly and also differently in different churches. There is no systematic training in Indian music. In the Madura-Ramnad Diocese of the Tamil church, there has always been a long tradition of indigenous music and the Tamil Theological College at Pasumalai has for many years specialized in the training of pastors, evangelists and people in Indian music. So we find Indian music very largely used in this Diocese.

In the Tirumaraiyur Theological College in Tirunelveli there is also a specific endeavour to teach and to popularize Indian forms of musical expression in church worship. The College has published an Indian form of the Sunday service with responses and canticles in Indian chants, and also a similar form for the service of Holy Communion. These are used frequently in the College and to some extent in the villages where the students from the College visit and conduct the services, but they have not found much favour in the large town congregations.

The S.I.U.C., one of the constituent bodies which formed the C.S.I. in 1947, many years ago produced an Indian form of church worship in which Indian lyrics were used for the Canticles, the Confession, Thanksgiving, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. This form of service, known as ‘the Lyrical service of worship’, was first produced at the home of Mr. K. T. Paul in Salem, with the help of the Rev. Francis Kingsbury and this writer, and was adopted by the General Assembly of the S.I.U.C. and issued and

published with its authority, in the year 1915. This was revised two or three times and the final edition was published by the C.L.S. in 1930. This lyrical form of service is used very extensively in the rural churches of the Madura-Ramnad and the Coimbatore Dioceses. The lyrical forms of Confession and Thanksgiving are taken from the Tamil Lyric Book and those for the Creed and the Lord's Prayer were specially composed for the service.

Many years ago Rabbi A. N. Sattam Pillai, of a Pentecostal section of the church in the Tirunelveli District, published a complete poetical version of the Psalms in Indian metres and a third edition of this work was published in Nazareth in 1931 by his grandson, Sri A. S. Rajanayagam Kulasekhararaj. A few of these Psalms are found in the Tamil Lyric Book and are regularly used by Tamil congregations, but the book as a whole is only used in the special sect connected with the Rabbi in Tirunelveli.

In the Andhra Pradesh, as one would expect among such a music-loving people, there is today a revival of Indian music in church worship, both in the urban and rural areas. This is especially noticeable in the Dornakal Diocese, but it is also found in the Rayalaseemna and the Kistna-Godavari Dioceses. In these Dioceses Indian songs are being used more and more for the Confession, Thanksgiving, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Indian musical instruments are also becoming more popular in the congregations for Christian worship. The Bishop in Dornakal says that he expects that in the course of a few years they will be universally used in all the churches. Indian Bhajana Sangams are found all over the Dioceses. Hymns to Western tunes are still sung in most of the town churches and are likely to continue, though they do not predominate. But in the rural churches they are only rarely used.

In Madhya Pradesh there is said to be a preference for Hindi bhajans in most of the village churches, but in the urban churches the Western hymn in Hindi translation is most frequently used. In some of the rural churches, also, the canticles set to Hindi chants are sung to Indian music. But it is said that in the urban churches the Psalms are still sung to Western tunes. Western musical instruments are used in practically all urban churches, but in some of the rural churches the drum and the violin and the small Indian harmonium are used for the Hindi bhajans.

In Uttar Pradesh an increasing use is being made of Indian music and of Indian musical instruments, especially in the rural parts. The Allahabad Bible Seminary teaches Indian music regularly to all the students and they make full use of it in their evangelistic work and to some extent also in their conduct of church services. The Principal of the Seminary laments that out of the 250 bhajans and gazals found in the Hindi song book, only a very small proportion are known to the people. He also says



that the quality of the Hindi bhajans is not up to that of the Western hymn translations.

It is unfortunate that in many of the States in India the Western harmonium is used very frequently not only for the Western hymns but also the playing of Indian lyrics and bhajans. Except in the rural churches it is rare to find the Indian cymbals and drum and other Indian instruments in many of the churches. The Western harmonium with its tempered scale is quite unsuited to Indian music and it is high time that its use for these should be discontinued altogether. It may be used for accompanying Western hymns but it should never be used for Indian tunes.

In evangelistic work, however, all the churches make use of Indian lyrics and bhajans and use Indian musical instruments. It is well known that in order to appeal to Hindus it is of no value to use Western hymns and Western musical instruments. They can only be attracted and won to attention by means of good Indian music. Since this is well known to the churches it is strange that they should continue to give so large a place in their worship services to Western music. It is perhaps because the leaders and people think that non-Christian Indians will not be attracted to the regular services of Christian worship and so it is no good trying to appeal to them to attend such services. But this is surely a mistake.

From this survey we may conclude that in the urban churches and the larger rural churches the services of Christian worship are sadly lacking in indigenous features. So to the ordinary Hindu the Christian religion still shows itself as a foreign religion in its worship services.

This is undoubtedly due in large measure to the fact that the origin and growth of Christianity in India has been due mostly to Western missionaries and evangelists, who have, consciously or unconsciously, imposed their forms of worship on the Christian congregations. Many of them considered the Hindu forms of worship to be so tainted with idol-worship as to be quite unsuitable for any form of Christian worship. Robert de Nobili and Constantine Beschi in the eighteenth century attempted to introduce into Christian worship some of the Hindu customs, but they were very severely criticized by the other missionaries and the Tournon Decree of 1704 forbade even the use of the *tali* in the marriage ceremony, as well as the kunkumam on the forehead. In the case of the Protestant missionaries, beginning with the arrival of the German Lutherans in 1706 at Tranquebar, they introduced into the Indian churches the traditional forms of worship in the Western churches from which they came and also the translations of Western hymns and taught the Christians to sing them.

In the nineteenth century there arose in the different regions many talented Indian Christians, who were both poets and musicians. In Tanjore, where the trinity of Carnatic music flourished, the Vedanayagam Sastriar family studied Carnatic

music and composed many Indian lyrics in Tamil to Indian classical tunes and also some to Indian folk melodies, and taught the congregations in Tanjore and the surrounding villages to sing these with Indian accompaniments. Many of their lyrics are now found in the Tamil Lyric Book and are used very frequently in the churches in the Tamil country, though they are not always sung correctly. In Kerala also there were poets, such as Devaram Munshi and John Palmer, who did the same. In the Maratha region Narayan Vaman Tilak, a gifted Maratha poet, composed many beautiful songs of devotion which have found a place in the Marathi song book and are used in the Marathi churches. In the Punjab many of the Psalms were set to simple folk tunes, called *zaburs*, and they are now sung throughout the Punjab in the Christian churches. In Bengal also, which has a rich and ancient musical tradition, many songs in Indian metres are found in the Bengal Hymn Book and are sung in the rural churches in Bengal. There is however a present tendency for the harmonium to be introduced and these beautiful melodies are often played on the harmonium, which spoils their beauty and robs them of their real Indian characteristics. This also leads to the use of some form of harmony for the Indian music which ill accords with the melodic character of the music.

As we have already noted Indian music and musical instruments are very greatly used in evangelistic work all over India. The fiddle, the drum, the tambour, cymbals and, in the north, the esraj are all commonly found in evangelistic services. Special forms of Indian musical services, such as the Bajanai, the Kalakshepam or Harikatha, are widely used. The Bajanai is a concerted singing and playing by a group of songsters and musicians and may be performed in a hall or in the open air. This is specially performed on Christian festival occasions. The Kaccheri is another form of this, in which a singer or a group of singers, with musical instruments, sing special songs connected with the particular festival being celebrated. The Kalakshepam or Harikatha is a kind of Indian opera in which one man, called a Bagavathar, assisted by another singer and players on various instruments, including the drum, cymbals and the violin, and either the tambour or the sruti harmonium for the tonic note, sings the different episodes of a Bible story. This is modelled on the Hindu performances by Bagavathars, who sing the story of some episode from the Puranas or from the lives of the Bhakti saints of Hinduism. This is called the Kirtan in the north. There have been many such talented Bagavathars in the south of India, including Vedanayagam Sastriar and his family, Sri T. Aiyadurai Bagavathar, the Rev. L. I. Stephen of Erode, and a few Westerners, as the Rev. E. E. White, the Rev. R. A. Hickling and others. In Maharashtra the Rev. L. R. Carner of the Christian Missionary Alliance conducts such Kirtans in Marathi. The story taken is usually one of the incidents in the life of Christ or one of His parables or an incident from the Old Testament. The whole of



the story is worked out in songs, usually specially composed either by the Bagavathar himself or by some other poet, and all the actions of the story are shown in the various songs. Such a performance may go on for as long as three or four hours and usually takes place in the evening and night. If the Bagavathar is a good singer and has good accompaniments the whole audience, both Christians and non-Christians, stays throughout and listens attentively. The Bagavathar will interpose between the songs prose narratives, enlarging the story, which he either intones or gives in ordinary speech. These performances are usually conducted in a good building so as to get the full character of the sound and so as not to strain the voice of the Bagavathar unduly. But nowadays with the aid of the microphone they are often held in the open air, with a small pandal for the singer and the musicians. Such performances are also conducted in churches on special occasions. This method of preaching the Gospel really means that its exposition is linked closely with the Indian form, and the audience in this way obtains a very good knowledge of the stories of the Bible.

In Tamilnad and in Andhra Pradesh there have been many fine Christian poets who have enriched the hymnology of the church in these regions with beautiful songs of devotion, penitence and Christian living. Narayan Vaman Tilak of the Maratha country has also contributed many such songs to the Maratha hymn book. The earlier Christian poets usually composed mostly songs of devotion and penitence and songs illustrating the life of Christ, especially His sufferings and resurrection. Later poets added many songs on the Christian life and the Holy Spirit. Most of these poets make use of Indian expressions and similes to express Christian ideas, such as the sacred feet of the Lord to indicate the grace of Christ. This is especially so in the case of those who were converted from Hinduism, such as H. A. Krishna Pillai and N. V. Tilak. Very few of these poets composed songs on the national life or on the Kingdom of God but later poets have to some extent filled in this vacuum.

#### HOW TO INCREASE AND IMPROVE THE USE OF INDIAN MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

The best way to increase and improve the use of Indian music and Indian musical instruments in Christian worship is through the media of the Theological Colleges and Seminaries, where the future ministers of the church are being trained. In Tirumaraipur, Pasumalai, Andhra Theological Colleges and in the Allahabad Bible Seminary, a good deal is being done in regard to this, but it is not entirely successful in winning the students to a real enthusiasm for Indian music or to a thorough knowledge of it.

In every such College or Seminary there should be a good teacher of Indian music who can train the students to sing and

play Indian music properly and to sing accurately the Indian lyrics already in our Lyric Books. It is also important that among the Christian teachers there should be someone who can help the students to make use of this in worship and to use Indian settings of canticles and Psalms in the services of the church. Then, too, the Colleges and Seminaries can conduct short courses for both ministers and laymen during the vacation, to which men and women from the surrounding towns and villages should be invited for specializing in Indian musical forms of worship. For many years the Y.M.C.A. in Madras conducted a Summer School of Musical Evangelism for about six weeks each year and this was attended by large numbers of students. Later it was carried on by the Pasumalai Seminary, but in recent years this has been discontinued. Now I understand that it is proposed to start this Summer School again this year and one must hope that it will be successful in attracting a large number of Tamil Christian workers. In such a school the more gifted can also learn how to conduct a Kalakshepam. This will be a great service to the whole church. It is also very important to demonstrate the value of Indian musical instruments in place of the Western harmonium. If the small Indian harmonium is used at all, it should only be used for playing the tonic note and its fifth. No attempt should be made to try and fit harmony to Indian music, as this is quite foreign to the melodic structure of Indian music.

Music is of great value in the conduct of Christian worship services and the Indian tradition of worship always places great emphasis upon this for expressing the deepest feelings of the worshipper. For the ordinary person both in rural and in urban churches only Indian music can do this adequately.

Then, also, only a very few in the churches can really appreciate Western music and play and sing it correctly. It is no doubt true that in many Christian congregations the Western hymns as translated into the regional languages are popular, and so it must be admitted that these will continue. But that should not mean that the Western hymns should have a predominating part in the service and the Indian lyric and bhajan or kirtan be relegated to a small and unimportant place. It is the practice in many town churches for three Western hymn translations to be used as against only one Indian lyric. This is very unfortunate and will not help the ordinary non-Christian to find much help or attraction in Christian services.

There are now in every regional language a large number of Indian lyrics and bhajans in Indian metres, which express often very beautifully the truths of the Gospel and the spirit of Christian teaching. Most of them are written in easily intelligible language which can be well appreciated by simple Christians and many of the tunes to which they are sung are very beautiful and inspiring.



It is very important that in every church, both rural and urban, there should be a small group of people who can sing these Indian lyrics properly and can lead the singing of the whole congregation. They should also have one or two Indian musicians who can play them on the violin or the sitar or esraj. This choir should be regularly and well trained. If there is one good Indian musician in a group of villages he could go to three or four villages around his own village and help the choirs in those villages. One who has listened to a good English choir will know how much such a choir can contribute to the spirit of worship and will be able to understand that Indian lyrics and bhajans sung accurately and with deep feeling will stir the religious emotions and strengthen the religious convictions of both singers and hearers. Such Indian songs will also be remembered by many of those who take part in the singing and will help them to express their feelings and ideas in the home and in times of private devotion. A friend of mine who was an educated man and used to Western hymns used to tell me that at night when he could not sleep he would always sing over to himself some of the Tamil lyrics which he knew and that in this way he calmed his spirit and spent the hours of sleeplessness to good purpose.

I have often heard the boatmen of Bengal and of Travancore singing their devotional hymns as they poled their boats along the waterways of these States and have noticed how well they sung, sometimes with musical accompaniment, and expressed their devotion to the God whom they knew. In Travancore where many of them were Christians they often used to sing Christian lyrics at this time. This is the natural way of Indian people to express their religious feelings and devotion.

It is important that more use should be made of the Kalakshepam and of the kirtan in evangelistic work. These are the regular means by which the Hindu impresses on the ordinary people the truths of their religion. If this is done reverently and with real sincerity and the Bagavathar and the singers and musicians are good it will have a very great and useful effect. It can also be used for special church services at festival times and similar occasions.

It is sometimes said that Indian music is not suited for congregational singing. This is not true. It is true that in classical music and in the singing and playing of Ragabhava it is the individual alone who can do it properly and so this aspect of the music will not be useful for congregational purposes. But this is only one aspect of Indian music and is no reason why in general there should not be more and more Indian music in our Christian services, as groups of singers are not expected to sing these individual extemporizations. I have heard in Santiniketan groups of young men singing the Bengali songs to Indian musical instruments in their worship and found it very inspiring and helpful. The main thing is that the congregation should sing the raga

correctly in correct tala, and if there is proper training this should not be difficult.

It is good to know from the brief survey that I have been able to make that in many States there is a strong and extending movement to introduce more and more of Indian music and musical instruments into Christian worship services and one can only hope that this movement will continue and that our worship services will become more Indian in style and spirit. It is very important that we should all help in this and do all that we can to make our services more indigenous, so that the ordinary people will be able to appreciate them more. I am sure that if this is done the majority of the congregations will be able to worship more reverently and more intelligently.



*For the (Hindu) Bhaktas, the God within is infinite joy. He is milk, sugarcane, nectar, luscious fruit, the finest of delicacies. Bhakti hymns use these terms again and again to describe the immanent God. . . . On the other hand the Fourth Evangelist speaks of the Christ within as water, bread, the staple of human food. What the Bhaktas desire is rapture, ecstasy—flights of emotion reserved for the few and that in extraordinary hours. What the Fourth Evangelist emphasizes is the moral strength which all men and women need to exercise every day of their lives. The Bhaktas would sing and dance, using highly aesthetic means for expressing their emotion. According to the Fourth Evangelist, the Christian brings forth 'fruits'—deeds of love and help. In the Fourth Gospel, mystic union is union with Christ, dominating our normal moments and providing us with the strength and peace necessary for our daily life. The indwelling Christ means enhanced energy for ordinary tasks, increased vitality for daily work. Mystic union for the Bhaktas spells sweetness, joy, all those feelings and thoughts and activities which belong to the realm of emotion.*



# Mystical Experience and Scientific Method

S. DAVID MALAIPERUMAN

Mysticism in the past has been treated either as a supernatural theory for gaining access to realms beyond or as a method of intuition above that of critical reason. Some have regarded it primarily as a metaphysical question or as an epistemological problem, while still others have treated mysticism purely as a psychological problem; some have gone to the extremes of interpreting the phenomena only in pathological terms. We shall endeavour to correlate the views and findings of those who have adopted the scientific method of inquiry in their study of mysticism, and to find a common ground on which the mystic outlook of the ancient East and the scientific world-view of the modern West may meet and pave the way for a synthetic *Weltanschauung*.

Any sane theory pertaining to mysticism must take into account the common elements and varied factors involved in all types of mystical experience, of all religions and all times. We are primarily concerned with the experience *per se* rather than with the cult of mysticism, which latter denotes the practice and theory whereby the experience is sought and cherished. The mystical element may be traced back to the primitive concept of *Mana*, which signifies the emotional reaction to the unknown and mysterious complexity of the surrounding universe. It refers to the reaction of early man to the *unknown*, a psychological reaction free from theorizing or questioning, the thrill yielding exaltation, elation and fear. Primitive man was given to wondering, groping into the vast unknown and imagining, when confronted with the strange and mysterious forces of nature and unfamiliar objects in the environment. It is not the mere unfamiliarity of facts 'fuzzy with mystery' which initiates mystical reaction. Rather mystical experience is awareness of that for which the existing equipment of organized habits and impulses is not sufficient to make adequate adjustment. Features of the environment and intricacy of stimuli are found to be too overwhelming for specific response.

There are various ways whereby one may react to the complexity of environmental stimuli: (a) through fanciful and wishful thinking; (b) through intelligent inquiry; (c) with strong emotion such as love, fear, awe and reverence, but with a minimum of imaginative construction. In the first instance, through fantasy and imagination, the complexity of environmental stimuli may attain the status of a spirit endowed with characteristics, and thus gain the semblance of reality with which one's organized behaviour can deal. In the second case, *Mana* may be the starting point of rational or self-conscious orientation to the world. On the other hand, mystical reaction exists where the subject does not attempt to bring the uninterpreted stimuli into the form of familiar objects, but reacts without understanding. Thus we may trace back to the concept of *Mana* the roots of myth, of science and of mysticism. But despite the development of myth and science there always remain areas of experience which are baffling and seem to withstand the effort to reduce them to familiar simplicity. These remain as a hinterland of mystery which challenges mankind. When one reacts with love or strong emotion to this area of experience one may be said to be mystical. What can be understood passes into the heritage of knowledge. What is not understood is ordinarily ignored. But when it does arouse emotional response and a kind of awareness without understanding, we have mystical experience.

In view of the fact that many of the psychological theories have emphasized one or other aspect of mysticism it is necessary to correlate the various findings of psychologists of religion. As a sympathetic critic, William James has laid stress on the noetic quality, ineffability, transiency and passivity of the mystic state of consciousness. He has also indicated the functioning of the subliminal region of consciousness. Introspective psychologists such as H. Delacroix have attempted to clarify the inner psychic states of the mystic; while, on the other hand, analytical psychology has rendered valuable service in understanding the external manifestations of the experience, its incidental features and pathological phenomena. Functionalism is characterized by three typical approaches that are mutually supplementary. G. A. Coe has laid stress on the temperament of the mystic, his enhanced sensitivity, suggestibility and richness of subconscious process; J. H. Leuba has laid stress on the importance of basic instincts or impulses and fundamental tendencies pertaining to the experience; E. S. Ames has taken into account the emotional quality of the experience as well as the social and environmental factors. Thus mystical experience is considered as a mode of adjustment and reaction under the stimulus of varying conditions of social environment. John Dewey's position is more tenable since he has taken all the three aspects of the functional approach into consideration. He has pointed out how the self is always directed to something beyond itself, and that the sense



of the union of the ideal and actual may, with some persons, be furthered by mystical experience. James Pratt and Robert Thouless have taken a very reasonable position and the eclecticism of the former is remarkable. They are cognizant of both the individual as well as social factors that enter into the experience, and they are willing to differentiate between the mild and extreme mystics. W. E. Hocking's clarification of the principle of alternation is invaluable in understanding the solitary and social aspects of mysticism. Psychology, being one of the younger sciences, has yet to give a conclusive interpretation of mystical experience. Here is a field that Gestalt psychology may venture to investigate further.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of mystical experience is the *sense of wholeness*. When some overwhelming experience of reality which is not mediated through established habit, custom or dogma breaks in upon the individual, one undergoes such an experience of merged totality. Psychologically it is the result of the breaking down of the narrow limits of selective consciousness, the release of subconscious areas, the diffusion of the organized system of responses, and freedom from repressions and tensions. The possibility of such an experience of wholeness, which is free from the more laborious step-by-step method of analytical procedure, has been recognized by recent psychology. Gestaltists maintain that all percepts involve qualities dependent on the way in which sensory elements are integrated, and they further stress the necessity of the study of organized wholes as they occur in experience and performance. The sense of wholeness is the reaction to the whole of experienced reality in synthesis. One is thus exposed to a vast range of stimuli, of which the individual is not aware in ordinary life, and which has to be formulated into specific patterns before attaining perceptual level.

Such mystics as claim imperviousness to external stimuli are affected by their environment mostly through the margin of consciousness. In rare moments, the penumbral region of consciousness, replete with hidden psychic activities, floods the senses with awareness and feelings. Modern research shows that there are constantly active the obscure phases of conscious operations which are capable of combining and re-combining, of modifying and integrating past experiences. These come to the surface of consciousness often in a most surprising manner in patterns or shapes very different from any of their prior organization. This process gives the clue to the understanding of mystical insights, revelations, the emergence of sudden meaningfulness, and the subsequent solution of problems. Hence it is no more necessary to postulate a sixth sense, an instinct of transcendence, a faculty of faith or a principle of self-verification in order to explain the seemingly anomalous experience of the mystic. We do not lay any claim to stimuli beyond those that come directly or indirectly through sensory

channels. Mystical experience is in no sense supernatural; rather it is super-usual or super-normal. The capacity to react to something more than the known entities is a natural gift in some cases. In others, whose minds and powers of correlation and association are insufficiently elastic for sensing areas of experience as yet unspecified in their nature, the experience may be achieved through continued practice and cultivation of a more inclusive interest as well as an attitude of wider receptivity.

When there is the impingement on consciousness of that which cannot be understood, it is impregnated with the emotions that surround the mysterious. Before such glow of ineffable mystery all habitual responses melt down into diffusion, and in extreme cases to confusion. Abnormality may be due to various factors such as fixation of attention, temperamental condition, hyper-suggestibility, incapacity for re-orientation and lack of rhythm or alternation. One should be cautious enough to take the whole process involved in mystical experience into consideration rather than isolated states of consciousness or the incidental and secondary manifestations. The essential error in the pathological theory regarding mysticism in general is to have seen only part of the whole question. The emotional theory of mystical experience is not necessarily identical with the pathological. Confusion between the datum of experience and the reaction of the individual mystic may lead one to jump to such conclusions as are postulated by the pathological theory. The value of the experience depends on something deeper than the trance state itself. The symptoms of the best mystics do not correspond with those of the patients in the psychiatric clinic, nor do they have the same significance. What is unusual is not necessarily abnormal.

In regard to the accusation that the mystics are anti-social, it is necessary to point out that it holds true only of static mysticism. Social efficiency is not the criterion of spiritual stature. 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?' The great mystics and prophets were those who were especially sensitive to the social interactions of the age, and they held a strategic position so that these interactions functioned through them. Jeremiah, Buddha, John Woolman, George Fox, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi are among those great revolutionaries and reformers whose messages reverberate unto the present day.

Numerous are the ways and expressions of the mystic vision of the whole. We are not, however, concerned with such pseudo-mystical states as those artificially induced by intoxicants, frenzied dancing, fasting, ceremonials, esoteric cults and orgiastic rites. Nor are we interested in such states that result from shock, fatigue, frustration, over-emotionalism and fixation. Rather we are interested in the best types of mystical experience such as aesthetic experience, the mysticism of human fellow-



ship, of romantic love, mystical worship and prophetic experience. Mystical experience becomes religious when one reacts with intense love, devotion and loyalty to the wholeness of things and events, fully aware that his patterns of thought fall short of the concrete reality and that he is dependent on this process of dynamic interrelationship, which is replete with value, for his security and fulfilment.

Amidst the discrepancy between the increasing complexity of present-day civilization, and the capacity of the human organism to cope with circumstance, there is the dearth of just those values which the mystics have heralded time and again—joy, peace, strength, harmony, vision, perspective and transmutation of pain. These arise out of the conviction of belonging to a greater whole of which the individual is only a part.

We have already stated that in mystical experience there are sense stimuli without perception. It is a state of undefined awareness. Instead of definition of the object that normally functions in all experience, in the case of the mystics it amounts to a feeling of identity with what is experienced. In the process of attempted conceptualization there may be a shift from one meaning to another until some interpretative concept is aroused that may, in some measure, fit the new situation. But even if one should succeed in conceptualization of the experience, the patterns of thought fall short of the concrete richness of data which the poet, artist, lover and the mystic alone are capable of apprehending. Undefined awareness is the state of transition between the imagery and established beliefs, which served to interpret one's deeper quest in the past, and those as yet unframed symbols which shall serve to interpret the deeper life of the future. The mystic cannot *know* what he is experiencing when the data pour into his consciousness, unless they are defined; and he does not necessarily have the right concepts with which to define them.

Since scientific method has only recently been used in the field of religious inquiry, the stock of concepts at its disposal is inadequate to the interpretation of mystical experience. Hence we need to call to our aid philosophic inquiry to clarify the concept of supreme value. This does not, however, minimize the fact that scientific method needs to be used in a special way in the search after the most worthwhile reality. How may we integrate the mystic quest with scientific method in the pursuit of the supreme good?

There are four essential factors involved in the search for the supremely worthwhile: (a) there must be the eager anticipation and driving zest; man's deepest urge and longing is the quest for more abundant life; (b) one must turn in the right direction and gain access to the proper data; one must have an appreciation of value; (c) one must have a method of inquiry to test the values and determine that which is supremely worthwhile; (d) these values must be further tested by experimental living.

This process requires the alternation of mystical experience and scientific method. In the last analysis mysticism has methodological significance. The correct understanding of the nature of that sustaining reality on which humanity is dependent for the highest values and enhanced living is the most precious knowledge that we can ever hope to attain. There is no other means of achieving knowledge relative to the supremely worthwhile than by way of mystical experience combined with the method of observation, analysis, criticism, reason and experiment. How these may function together we shall proceed to show. We shall use the term *God* to symbolize the object of our supreme concern, loyalty and devotion.

The religious quest requires two things: (a) mystical experience as one of the great sources of religious insight; (b) scientific method as a means of treating the insight. The way mystical experience yields insight is as follows. First of all there must be the longing and deep yearning for oneness with the ongoing process of value in the universe. One must be emancipated from the constraints of theoretical and practical consciousness, must become intensely sensitive and receptive, and must expose oneself to the total stimuli. The conditions for the free and spontaneous play of impulses, as well as the total psycho-physical capacity for appreciation, must be provided. One must restrict inquiry to the realm of empirical search and put aside all claim to knowledge save that alone which is established by scientific method. This well tested fact will be used as a tool in the exploration of the wealth of unexplored reality which looms in mystery. Such a mystic will be humble, appreciative and reverent; he will give up all his cherished hopes, longings, desires, heart-warming beliefs, accepted ideals and any *a priori* assumption as to the nature of God. He knows only that there is a supreme reality, higher than his hopes, greater than his ideals, richer than all his concepts, loftier than all his beliefs or pet theories, much more precious than all the dogmas, something which commands his all-absorbing loyalty and elicits loving devotion. Deeply sensitized, he allows his whole self to be pervaded by the unifying activity of the object. He is uplifted by the sustaining reality of God, becomes emotionally suffused and appreciative of the concrete fullness of the datum in its undifferentiated totality. Emancipated from the complexities of ordinary existence, he senses the higher unity which is replete with undefined meaningfulness. Instead of focusing on values which are but meagrely abstracted in language he reacts to the wholeness of God. The heightening of creative imagination and the deep qualitative richness of immediate experience are conducive to the dawn of insight. Instead of revelling in blissful ecstasy he seeks to understand the nature of that reality which commands his supreme devotion. However vaguely this illimitable mystery may be apprehended, the experience of the mystic is of such a nature that out of it may

arise some clue as to the finding of facts related to supreme reality.

Having attained the insight through mystical experience, the mystic should proceed to test it and determine the criterion by which the sustaining reality may be distinguished. He finds that isolated entities become significantly illumined through the vision of wholeness. He must return to the area of hard empirical facts to test and verify the insights. Through observation and reason he will seek to formulate a proposition so that the immediate data may be fitted into a pattern. But this proposition will be accepted only as a theory without any claim to cover more than a very meagre part of the ineffable mystery. The theory will attain the status of knowledge only when it meets rigorous tests through rational inference and experimental behaviour. He must constantly return to the veil of immediacy and regain the sense of dynamic interrelationship in order to attain perspective, energy and sense of direction. Mere enjoyment of experience does not constitute value. What is once consummatory must in turn be instrumental to the emerging sequence of values. Through experimental behaviour one realizes that integrative interaction and shareability are important aspects of that actuality which sustains unknown possibilities of highest value. One thus regards one's own problem to be the general difficulty of others and is willing to share with other persons the joys of solving the problem.

Such a mystic as we have referred to is a bold experimenter who has discovered some of the conditions favourable in the progressive realization of the supreme goal of humanity. He is one who is able to reorient himself to the envisaged ideals rather than cling tenaciously to old concepts. He will regard abstract and attested propositions or theories as essential, but will be prepared to look always beyond to the further possibilities that may yet be unravelled.

To attain progressively knowledge of the supreme good, two steps are essential: (a) mystical experience, which goes beyond established meanings and leads to awareness of a system of meaningfulness yet to be specified; (b) reflective thinking, which is necessary to achieve cognitive clarity. Thus, only those who can combine and integrate the greatest rigour of reason with the utmost capacity for devotion and appreciation shall rise above the perplexities and intricacies of the work-a-day world and interact with that process of dynamic and organic interrelationship which sustains the supreme good.

In the quest for the more abundant life communion with God as well as understanding and knowledge of God are both essential.



# Review Article

## IS THE SYRIAN CHURCH MORE THAN A MUSEUM PIECE ?

C. E. ABRAHAM

Ever since Cladius Buchanan presented to the world in 1811 his discovery of the Syrian Church of Malabar in his *Christian Researches in Asia* not a few monographs and books have been written on different aspects of the life and history of this ancient church. But the book<sup>1</sup> under review stands out from the rest that we have seen in the thoroughness of its scholarship and the sympathetic understanding of the subject by the author. One may hazard the prophecy that the book will become a classic in the field in course of time.

The book is in three parts. Part I deals with the St. Thomas tradition and the chequered history of the Church, Part II with the social life and Part III with the worship and faith of the St. Thomas Christians. The book gains an unusual interest from the last two sections where the author gives an extremely interesting account of the pattern of the social life of the Syrian Christians, their modes of worship and their theological outlook. The author has taken great pains in bringing together materials from various sources dealing with the above subjects and for this readers are very much in his debt.

The book raises several points of unusual interest and we may notice some of them in a brief compass in this article.

1. *The Apostolic Origin of the Church of Malabar.*—Speaking generally, to the Syrian Christians it is almost an article of faith that their Church was founded by the Apostle Thomas. Some of their own scholars however vehemently oppose this theory. The author has examined the evidence for and against the apostolic origin of the Church and comes to the conclusion that perhaps it is 'a reasonable probability'. In the same context he makes the interesting statement: 'It is not impossible that St. Bartholomew was in fact India's apostle, but his claim can no more be proved than that of St. Thomas' (p. 63).

In dealing with this thorny problem the author has shown a degree of scholarly objectivity which is highly commendable.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Christian of St. Thomas*: by L. W. Brown. Cambridge University Press, 1956. Pages i-xii + 315. Price 40s.

However, against this background it is rather difficult to understand why the author, in speaking of the members of the Syrian Church in Kerala, instead of using a non-committal name, should refer to them as 'St. Thomas Christians' in various parts of the book.

2. *The litigious spirit of the Syrian Christians.*—The modern period deals with developments in the Church beginning with the arrival of the C.M.S. Missionaries in 1816. The mission of help of the C.M.S., the foundation of the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin, the Reform movement and the formation of the Mar Thoma Church and the modern divisions in the Church are all included in the scope of the author's discussion. This chapter, it must be said, makes extremely sad reading. It is doubtful if in the history of the Church in any other part of the world there have been so many causes of dispute taken to the law court as in Travancore and Cochin within the last 75 years. The Syrian Church probably holds a record—an unenviable one—in the matter of litigation. Church authorities and members alike take to the law courts as fish to water; this blight is found in all sections of the Church except perhaps the Roman Catholic. In this matter the prophet's words have come true: 'Our fathers have eaten sour grapes and our teeth are set on edge.' The dependence of the Church on state recognition, mutual excommunication by Bishops and patriarchs, setting store by property to enhance the prestige of the Church and other similar worldly means adopted by leaders of the Church in the past are some of the factors responsible for inducing a worldly and legalistic frame of mind in the rank and file of Church membership. The author will have done a service to the Church if by the cataloguing and objective description of what seems to be interminable disputes in the Church the attention of the world Church is turned to this trait in the make-up of the Kerala Christians and a sense of shame is induced in their Christian consciousness. Unless the 'devil of litigiousness' is driven out there is not much of a future for the Syrian Church in India.

3. *Indigenization.*—There is no doubt that Christians in Travancore and Cochin are rooted in the cultural soil of the country. Though they profess a religion different from that of the majority of their countrymen they are not looked upon as 'foreigners' in a cultural sense. In matters of dress, social customs, ways of thinking and pursuit of culture they are as true Indians as any of their countrymen in Kerala. In modern times the integration of Christianity with cultural patterns which owe their inspiration to non-Christian sources is gaining in importance in the discussion of the ways and means of the communication of the Christian gospel. One looks with great interest and expectation, therefore, to the example of the Syrian Church in Travancore. The author has given a faithful description of the way of life of the Syrian Christians in Kerala in Part II of this book. When it comes, however, to drawing lessons from Syrian

history for present-day application the emphasis seems to be on the side of warning rather than of positive guidance. Their cultural adjustment was so perfect that for all practical purposes the Syrian Christians were a recognized part of the social hierarchy in Kerala whose dominant principle was privilege based on caste and rank in society. The Syrian Christians apparently were altogether indifferent to the duty of evangelism towards their non-Christian neighbours until the coming of the Western missionaries. Many customs and practices unworthy of the faith they professed crept into their social life and the total picture we get is not altogether an encouraging one for those who advocate wholesale adoption of cultural patterns by Christians of the countries they happen to live in. If there was one thing that saved the situation it was the influence of Christian worship. As the author says: 'There seems no doubt that it was the cultus which enabled the St. Thomas Christians to remain authentically Christian down the ages' (p. 5). But even about this it may be noted that the mode of worship of the Syrian Christians, though Eastern, has little that is distinctively Indian about it.

4. *The Faith of the St. Thomas Christians.*—In the last chapter the author gives an account of the faith of the Orthodox Church basing it on expositions of the faith published in Malayalam. The use of the title 'St. Thomas Christians' in this section as well as in certain other parts of the book is rather misleading because by this phrase the author means not the whole Syrian Church but the main branch of it which is called Jacobite and Orthodox, i.e. the two sections known popularly as the Patriarch's Party and the Catholicos' Party. The theology of the Syrian Church has been suspect for a long time on account of the Church connection at different stages of its history with the Nestorians on the one hand and the Jacobites of West Syria on the other. The author tries to remove this misconception. There has not been much theological thinking on the part of the Syrian Christians though they have been anxious to preserve intact what they believed to have been delivered to them by their fathers. In some of their beliefs as in their practices one notices the influence of Hindu ideas. This section also contains the surprising statement that 'The Syrians look for a literal bodily resurrection at the Last Day' (p. 295). Even if by 'Syrians' the author means 'the Orthodox section of the Syrian Church' it is doubtful if the statement will pass muster with their theologians! Though the liturgy of the Syrian Church contains a great deal of Scriptural material and the Eucharistic Order keeps close to the life of our Lord there are some parts in the worship of the Church in which ideas which are but loosely connected with the teaching of the New Testament have found lodgement. This is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that while the Syrian Church in Malabar had its liturgy with it for centuries together the Bible was translated into Malayalam only about a hundred years ago.



On the whole, excellent as the book is, the Church that is described in its pages looks more like a museum piece than a living and actively functioning part of the Body of Christ. This is not the author's fault ; the subject of his study, by which we mean the Syrian Church in all its branches, unfortunately bears the stamp of death on it in many of its activities. Yet it is not the whole truth. The author refers here and there to signs of new life in the Church, which could have been amplified. Further if he had widened the scope of his work and described to us the workings of the spirit of God in the different sections of the Church in Kerala he would have conveyed a totally different impression of this ancient Church.

If the Syrian Church is to be more than a museum piece it is necessary that the leaders of all sections of the Church should cease from glorying in the past, and look with real concern on some of the present-day tendencies in the Church and pray for the guidance of God that she may be loyal to the Master who said 'And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring . . . and they shall become one flock, one shepherd'.



*A Sanskrit writer even goes to the length of asking: 'How will it help a hungry man if you eat rice pudding? How will it help another man if you pray for him?' This reflects the general trend of religious thought in India. The privilege of interceding for others has not been realized or used in any large way in our country. But if . . . our love of God is real only in so far as it becomes actual in our love of man, prayer too, that highest of all religious experience, must be as much for others as for ourselves. Selfishness in prayer is the worst form of selfishness.*



### THE WILLIAM CAREY LECTURE, 1957

In January, 1957, Dr. Pierce Beaver delivered the William Carey Lecture in Serampore College ; this has now been published by the Baptist Mission Press, 41a Lower Circular Road, Calcutta (from whom it may be obtained). We commend this lecture to our readers and hope to give a full review in our next number.

## Book Reviews

*The Nature and Function of Priesthood*: by E. O. James.  
Thames & Hudson, London, 1955. Pp. 336. 25s.  
(Available from Orient Longmans (Private) Ltd., Post Box  
2146, Calcutta.)

The book under review is not a theological, devotional or apologetic work but, as the sub-title informs us, 'a comparative and anthropological study' or, in the words of its preface, 'an anthropological and comparative inquiry into the nature and function of the institution of priesthood as an integral element in social structure'. Its author, E. O. James, Professor of the History and Philosophy of Religion in the University of London, is a serious scholar whose numerous books, *The Social Function of Religion*, *The Old Testament in the Light of Anthropology*, *Comparative Religion*, etc., have earned him an international reputation. His present work is the result of a long investigation, and incorporates the data collected on this subject on the occasion of lectures delivered in the University of Amsterdam in 1949 and subsequently in the University of Liverpool, as also the gist of papers contributed to the International Congress for the History of Religions.

Professor James starts his study with an attempt at determining the place and function of the priest's office in primitive society, clearly distinguishing this office from that of the shaman and the magician. In a second chapter, he describes the rôle played by divination and the mantic art in the social structure of the ancient world. He then considers the functions of the prophetic office in relation to priesthood with special reference to Israel and Arabia. The fourth chapter, on 'Kingship and Priesthood', examines in detail the crucial position occupied by kingship in the social structure and sacred organization of Egypt, Mesopotamia and ancient Israel. The following chapters analyse the different functions of the priesthood institution: its primary function which is the offering of sacrifice; the sacerdotal ministry of absolution from evil, sin and guilt; the rôle of the priest as a man of learning and the guardian of sacred tradition. In Chapter VIII, the juridical authority which has traditionally been conferred upon priests is investigated both in ancient and in modern religious societies. The last chapter sums up the conclusions of the whole work.

While Christian theologians and exegetes will at times disagree with certain interpretations and views of the author whose

treatment of the Sacred Scripture, though respectful and scholarly, is not free from a naturalistic and rationalistic bias, they may find in this book much precious material for their own work. The central notions of sacrifice and priesthood, essential to Christianity, have been admirably explored by Professor James and this exploration, both historical and anthropological, throws much light on the whole ecclesiastical structure of the Church.

‘In Christianity the Founder . . . by virtue of his Godhead hypostatically united with his manhood, as priest and victim . . . is able in his own right and by his own redemptive power to reconcile man with God. This is accomplished through the remission of sins ascribed to his redeeming sacrifice on behalf of the human race, of which he is the divinely appointed head. But what has been wrought by a special divine intervention in time and space, at a particular moment of history, has to be made actual and efficacious throughout the ages. . . .

Therefore, the carrying on of the work of mediation became the *raison d'être* of the Christian priesthood and the primary purpose of its hierarchic organization. To this end its principal function always has been that of perpetuating the sacrificial act of redemption by the offering of its *anamnesis* on earth in union with its heavenly presentation by the eternal high-priest. Next to the Eucharistic oblation as the centre of Christian worship, it has become the duty of the priest, standing between God and the redeemed humanity, to absolve the penitent and so to effect the work of reconciliation as the duly commissioned agent of Christ, the redeemer and mediator. Moreover, in this capacity, the priest acts as judge since he is required to estimate the spiritual condition of the penitent and to pass judgment accordingly. This presupposes his having received the necessary jurisdiction to fulfil the office, be it either “ordinary” or “delegated” jurisdiction’ (pp. 294 and 295).

The author rightly observes that a clearer understanding of the fundamental notions of priesthood and sacrifice may contribute to ‘the removal of at any rate some of the causes of division on all sides’:

‘By common consent the Ordinal and the Liturgy, and all that lies behind them, constitute the crucial factors in the problem of the re-integration of a divided Christendom because priesthood and sacrifice always have been the unifying and stabilizing force in the ecclesiastical structure, and not least in that of the Christian Church in West and East alike’ (p. 175).

It may be regretted that Professor James should have ignored some of the best anthropological and historical works of Catholic scholars, like those of W. Schmidt on *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, as also the monumental studies of Jungmann and de la Taille on the nature and meaning of the Christian Sacrifice. Though primarily anthropological, the present investigation often deals with difficult problems of scriptural exegesis and Biblical scholarship, the solution of which would have been at times more satisfactory if the author had followed the guidance of the best Christian students of the Bible. As it is, the book of Professor James is an important and valuable contribution to our understanding of the nature and function of priesthood.



*The Word of the Cross to Hindus*: by E. W. Thompson. Published by the C.L.S., Madras. Revised edition first printed in India, 1956. Pp. 175. Rs.4/50.

(Available from C.L.S., Post Box 501, Park Town, Madras 3.)

The treatment of Hinduism in this book is sympathetic and the attitude towards it is fair; the author is courteous, even kind, and yet frank and truthful.

Certain general comments seem called for:

- (a) In the Preface the author speaks of the Cross *against* the Indian background; it is better to speak of the Cross *in* or *with* the Indian background. It is true that the Cross is to the Jew a scandal, and to the Greek foolishness, but the Hindu is neither a Jew nor fully a Greek; he is a little different and has a distinctive attitude to the Cross.
- (b) The appeal of the book would have been enhanced if the Appendices had been omitted altogether. There are in them certain misstatements about Hinduism which might stifle response in the Hindu heart. For example:
  - (i) The author speaks of the way in which the Gita justifies ruthless killing; the Hindu will sit up on reading this. It is not ruthless killing but the place of war or the use of force under the Hindu social scheme (*varṇa dharma*) which is justified in the Gita.
  - (ii) The author equates the *Samṛbhava* of the Vedāntin and the *Niṣkāṁ* of the Gita with Stoic ideas which are not strictly parallel. *Niṣkāṁ* is not action without desire (an impossibility); it means action without personal desire of fruit or hope of reward; it is doing one's duty as unto God. Of course philosophers are not the whole of the people but in China and in India their influence has permeated the masses.
- (c) It is unfortunate that the author has not made enough use of Hindu *tyāg* and *yajña* as a preparation for the Cross. In Hindu scriptures (especially in the earlier scriptures) there is a keen sense of sin. Hindus have all through purged their formal systems into principles of moral action. I wish the author had made more use of the points of contact while retaining the contrast between the Cross and Karma and Avatāra, etc.

Other points of interest may be noted :

- (a) The time has not yet come to speak of a rift between India's political preoccupation and the practical implications of the Advaita.
- (b) The author has made a very good point when he says (on page ix) that 'the teaching and example of Jesus have shown to us that there is only one right means of propagating and defending pure and undefiled religion . . . force of truth and goodness'. This will hardly be supported by the nature of the Christian enterprise in India.
- (c) Neutralism is not just tolerance ; India conceives of and works out the idea in a positive constructive way. It is not only impartiality to all religions but positive sympathy and helpfulness wherever necessary.
- (d) It is a healthy thought that nothing in Hinduism which is good and beautiful need be lost in the Church.
- (e) Converts have not always been respected within Hinduism, the main reason being their adherence to Western ways and not the offence of the Cross.
- (f) The statement at the bottom of page 116 about the acceptance of suffering is not correct. There are cases of suffering, voluntarily accepted for the good of others, even in historical Hinduism. Space forbids any reference to this ; even Radhakrishnan's meagre reference is significant (page 117, bottom note).

The book is worth study by Christians. The style is lucid and the thought clear. Though it contains certain inaccuracies, it is a fair appraisal of the Hindu and Christian verities.

Varanasi

R. C. DAS

*The Old Testament in Modern Research* : by Herbert F. Hahn.  
S.C.M. Press, 1956. 16s.

(Obtainable from Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell Street, Calcutta 16.)

An Old Testament scholar of a former generation is said to have remarked that since the problems of the Old Testament had all been solved, he would henceforth turn his attention elsewhere. A glance at this book will indicate that at the middle of the twentieth century we have reached a point at which new

problems are constantly having to be faced by those who seek to understand the message of the Old Testament. Dr. Hahn has evidently read widely and painstakingly, and he sets before us here the developments which have taken place in recent Old Testament research in such fields, among others, as literary criticism, anthropology, sociology, archaeology and theology.

It is inevitable that a work like this should prove somewhat disappointing to its readers. It is always less satisfying to read someone else's criticisms of a writer's point of view than to read the original arguments at first hand. A tremendous amount of work has clearly gone into this book, and it will be a valuable reference book for some time to come, since it summarizes so many of the discussions in which Old Testament scholars have been involved for generations. Nevertheless, there is a disadvantage in gaining a conspectus of any wide field study through the eyes of one individual alone. Though this book will to some extent supplement the composite volume of essays 'The Old Testament and Modern Study' published in 1951, it is a far from adequate substitute for it in the very field which it attempts to cover.

It is unfortunately (for non-Scandinavians!) true to say that nobody is really qualified to write a book on the present position in Old Testament studies who is not familiar with at least one Scandinavian language. Dr. Hahn shows no evidence of having read any of the numerous works of modern Scandinavian Old Testament scholars except those written or translated in English and German. This means that important books by Bentzen and Engnell, and Mowinckel's great book *Han som kommer*, published in Copenhagen in 1951, and recently translated into English, are entirely ignored. His neglect of Scandinavian material is also evident from the fact that Bentzen's *King and Messiah* is not even mentioned in its German original, although it was published as long ago as 1948. It is perhaps only to be expected that American contributions to Old Testament research should be emphasized at the expense of those from the other side of the Atlantic, but it is a little disconcerting to find on page 79 that an American writer is credited with a noteworthy discovery in a publication attributed, in a footnote, to the year 1938, while the next sentence suggests that a further step was subsequently taken in the same direction by the British writer, A. R. Johnson, in an essay published in 1935!

Too much attention need not be paid to a publisher's 'blurb', but the claim which is made for this book that 'an up-to-date bibliography with a complete author index makes it an invaluable volume for scholar and layman alike' is open to dispute on both points. The incompleteness of the author index is no doubt excusable, but the bibliography is by no means up to date, which detracts considerably from the value of such a book as this claims to be. Though it first appeared (in Britain at least) in 1956, the reviewer could not find more than two references to books



published later than 1951, and very few in that year. This compares unfavourably with the volume of essays mentioned above, in which there are a number of references to publications dated in 1949. There is, in fact, a considerably fuller treatment of the Dead Sea scrolls in the earlier volume than in this one, where they are relegated to an 'Additional Note' of less than a page. It is a pity that the 'Bibliographical Notes' in Chapter I could not have been continued throughout the book, as that would have enhanced its value considerably.

*Serampore*

B. F. PRICE

*Premananda*: the Autobiography of P. A. N. Sen. S.P.C.K. (Obtainable from S.P.C.K., Post Box 1585, Kashmere Gate, Delhi 6, or from the Calcutta Diocesan Book Depot, 53A Chowringhee Road, Calcutta 16.)

The writer of this autobiography, whom many readers must know, is anxious to tell them of his experiences in his quest for a living faith and of the wonderful ministry of Grace which gave him spiritual maturity and poise. Born in an orthodox Hindu family of affluent means, and reacting with hatred and opposition to his first contacts with the Christian faith, he yet became an ardent devotee of Jesus Christ. While on the point of burning down the preaching booth of some Christian missionaries from Kalna, a sudden change took place in his heart by the reading of the Gospels from a Bible which he had stolen from the tent. Conversion followed and accepting Christ by public confession and baptism, he advanced far into the mystic life, while at the same time he spent his life in the service of the sick and the underprivileged. His experience bears remarkable testimony to the effectiveness of the Written Word, the Bible, as an evangelist. He drew inspiration and direction from the Bible in coming to his religious faith, which was greatly helped and proved by the unselfish and self-giving way of life of missionaries and Christian laymen, both foreign and Indian, whom it was his good fortune to meet in times of material need and spiritual difficulty.

With an initial horror of leprosy and lepers, he began to work for them as a Christian duty, but one night God spoke to him through Mrs. X who said, 'Mr. Sen, when you come in the midst of us, we forget that we are loathsome lepers.' The founding by him of two leper dispensaries in Calcutta, now called 'Premananda' Leper Dispensaries, was the outcome of his self-surrender to Christ that very night when, before returning home, he lay himself prostrate before the altar in the Chapel attached to the Mission House where he was living.

The autobiography refers repeatedly to the close companionship and spiritual fellowship with his wife who shared to the full his care and solicitude for those in need and inspired

him to provide, after her death, the Anugrihita Sen Rest House at Ranchi.

The reader will meet the writer as a mystic and will profit by his 'meditations'; he will also find encouragement by his example as a social worker. He will find an interesting description of the Hindu joint family of fifty years ago and will be introduced to many of the leading missionary and lay personalities, Christian and non-Christian, of that time and later.

It is to be hoped that there will be a Bengali edition of this autobiography as it provides a most remarkable testimony to the relevance of the Christian Gospel for those who seek salvation through philosophy and the doctrine of works.

Calcutta

N. K. BOSE

*Islam and the Gospel of God* : by H. Spencer, Delhi. S.P.C.K., 1956. Pp. 122. Re.1/25.  
(Obtainable from S.P.C.K., Post Box 1585, Delhi 6.)

The author of this interesting booklet is the principal of the Henry Martyn School of Islamics, Aligarh. With evangelical boldness he compares the central doctrines of Christianity with those of Islam for the benefit of Christian workers among Muslims. The study, based on numerous sources, will come as a revelation to many. Superficial contacts with Muslims and with Islamic literature may easily lead the unwary to interpret the religion of Islam in a Christian way: do not the Muslims believe in one God and in revelation, in sin and in the need of purification, in divine guidance and in man's destiny, in God's glory and love and grace? But, warns the author, if the theological vocabulary used by Muslims and Christians is often similar, the concepts connoted by the words are often very different.

The conception the faithful have of God's nature and 'character' necessarily dictates their attitude towards other religious truths. Now according to the author the Christian concept of the Divine Being stands 'in radical opposition' (p. 14) to the Islamic concept of Allah! Allah, we are told, was at first associated by the Arabs with the worship of the Kaaba 'along with such goddesses as *Allat* and with feminine Angels, with Satan and with the Jinn' (p. 3). The prophet Muhammad rid Allah of all these associated deities and eventually identified Allah with the God of the Bible. The attributes, however, which Muslim theologians gave Allah are not those of Jahwe, still less those of God in the New Testament. Allah, no doubt, is the Supreme Being, but so enclosed in His unconditioned omnipotence and majesty as to be inaccessible to the created mind and unknowable; He is the absolute and unique efficient cause of all things, good and evil, to the exclusion even of man; His divine ruling of the universe and of man is totally unpredictable.

Allah is said to have given the Arabs a Holy Book, the Qur'ān ; but in it or through it Allah did not reveal Himself as God did through the Bible ; the Qur'ān is primarily a code of law.

Allah's absolute independence and omnipotence reflect on man's free will which is denied ; they deprive man of the supernatural destiny after which he craves, for, even in paradise, Allah will not communicate Himself to his soul ; they rob penance of its meaning for Allah pardons as He pleases without any regard to man's deserve ; they take away from the virtue of faith any meritorious value, for 'the faith which every believer has in his heart is the portion which Allah destined for him from all eternity' (p. 79) ; they leave no place for genuine love of God since love means mutual tradition, no place for grace which is a sharing of Divine Life by man.

All these are tragic conclusions ! How far, however, the ordinary Muslim who is not a theologian—and maybe also the theologian out of School—is influenced by the implications of this scholastic reasoning is difficult to say, the more so that in practice many of the asperities of abstract *tawhid* (Islamic theology) are rounded off by a more humane Sufism.

We must be grateful to Mr. Spencer for having stressed the need of studying carefully the intellectual background of the Muslim before presenting the Christian message to him. But while mindful of what divides, the Christian worker will do well to seek rather what unites ; for in spite of differences, there are also in Islam many elements of truth on which agreement is possible and which may prove the corner-stone of mutual understanding and love.

Calcutta

V. COURTOIS, S.J.

*Sin and Salvation* : by Bishop L. Newbigin. S.C.M. Press, London. Pp. 128. 8s. 6d.  
(Obtainable from Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell Street, Calcutta 16.)

This is a book written for the layman in the church and one of its conspicuous features is the simplicity of its style.

The first four chapters deal with the general nature of sin and the situation which sin has produced. By nature man is in a state of contradiction against the natural world, against his fellowmen, in himself and ultimately against God. Though he was created in the image of God his disobedience cast him from the presence of God. 'Unbelief is the beginning of sin, it is the very root and basis of sin' (p. 20). Therefore the need of belief—faith arises, to cover sin. 'God has not shown us everything about the origin of evil, He has shown us His own saving work by which evil is overcome' (p. 40).

The next four chapters deal with preparation for salvation, the work of a Saviour, how salvation becomes ours, and the final



consummation of salvation. 'Sin is a terrible reality which could only be overcome by mighty acts of God' (p. 43). Therefore the author, in the spirit of a New Testament writer, devotes more than a quarter of the book to explain the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. Here, he has dealt with many questions that may come to the mind of the reader regarding the death of Christ.

The author compares Christian truths with some of the Hindu doctrines while dealing with the results of sin. He tells the syncretist that 'it is a fatal illusion to think that all roads lead to the same end. On the contrary, there is a road that leads to life and a road that leads to death' (p. 33).

The author is precise and clear in his thinking. The large number of Bible references in the book, over 217, emphasizes the Biblical basis of the book.

He has tried to present the theme in an Eastern setting with the help of illustrations familiar to the Indian mind. Yet we cannot say that he has fully succeeded in this attempt. No mention is made about the fate of the man who dies in sin. It would be helpful if some more pages were devoted to give a Christian solution of the difficulties confronted by a mind pre-occupied by the thought of endless birth.

On the whole, the book may be declared a success in explaining vital doctrines of faith in simple and intelligible language to the ordinary man. The great welcome awaiting this book by laymen will inspire Indian authors, one hopes, to follow in the footsteps of Bishop Newbigin, in the presentation of Christian truth to non-Christian enquirers, with conviction blended with the grace of persuasiveness.

*Serampore College*

K. V. MATHEW

*And After This ?* : by H. N. Hancock. Longmans Green & Co.  
Pp. 116×12. 8s. 6d.

(Available from Orient Longmans (Private) Ltd., Post Box 2146, Calcutta.)

One of the most pertinent of Christian themes is life after death. It is easy for one to come away from the Bible with a puzzled mind about the future life. Superstructures of wishful thinking have been built on slender foundations which from age to age have to be demolished or thoroughly remodelled. Simple Christians have more often been confounded by this overhauling than confirmed in their faith. As the Reverend Harry N. Hancock in his book *And After This ?* points out simply but impressively: 'Reality is always surrounded by mystery.' No book on this great subject can be entirely satisfying. There are a number of books solid and sound on this subject but *And After This ?* has the great merit of being simple. It can be read through by any ordinary but eager mind. The author does not

heavily fill the pages with scriptural quotations which hamper one's understanding rather than help one's comprehension.

In the first three chapters the author proceeds in the ordinary traditional way of establishing reasonable grounds for belief in life after death. Death is an experience which no one can taste for himself and give others the pleasure or otherwise of it; it is a unique experience. 'There is no rational ground for assuming (without the slightest proof) that life beyond physical death is impossible. The Christian belief in eternal life is not against reason.' Then the author skims the troubled waters of retribution and reward, the relationship between goodness and happiness, between righteousness and prosperity. Life after death is a life of a society of persons—individual personalities. So far the author's handmaid is reason. One wonders whether the author's traditional way of starting with reason is helpful, because there are reasons equally valid, which may not be for the author but for others, to say that death is the end of life. But probably when writing a simple book for the ordinary man the author's approach is quite appropriate. Reason stands dumb in the presence of the overpowering fact of death; and always it is an unconquerable faith which has pierced the vale of death.

With the fourth chapter the Biblical emphasis on life after death begins. From now on right to the end the author gives the impression that he has struggled with the problems of the resurrection of the body, judgement, heaven, hell and the communion of saints. Anyone going through these pages will find them provoking and at the same time compelling one to nobler heights of Christian living.

The two chapters on the resurrection of the body and the spiritual body outline in a very convincing way the reality of our Lord's bodily resurrection as alone explaining the New Testament post-resurrection occurrences. The Resurrection of our Lord is rightly taken as the guarantee and pattern of our resurrection. The continuity in discontinuity of the Risen Body with the Crucified Body is stated in simple terms.

The next three chapters are to be taken in one breath. Judgement is not arbitrary but self-imposed. At the last day the sheep go to the right and the goats to the left, not because of anything God does, but simply because of the fact that one class is sheep and the other goats. The distinction the author makes between the particular and the final judgement is worthy of consideration. But when he says that death marks the end of our period of probation and the exercise of our freedom of choice and of moral responsibility, one finds it incompatible with that which has already been said by the author. This statement does not fit in with the rest of his thesis that life after death is the life of a society of persons. The very word personality involves exercise of freedom of choice, and life after death means abundant life and not limited freedom. If the life of probation ends at death then there is no point in making



a distinction between particular judgement and the final judgement. How can this statement be squared with what he has to say in the following chapter on the intermediate state of our dead beloved ones, who are acquitted in the particular judgement, are safe from the eternal punishment from His presence which is hell, and are living and growing in the love and service of God ?

In the last but one chapter on the communion of saints the author has convincingly presented the fact that death cannot sever the bonds of Christian fellowship. This is a much needed warning to the indifferent and unthinking attitude framed to the minds of many who are called 'evangelicals'. The author has shown that prayer is the cementing factor between the living and the dead. He rightly has no place for praying to the saints or through the saints, which has to be condemned at any cost. In the last chapter the author shows how essential it is to have a clear and Biblical perspective of this doctrine in order to live the fully fledged life.

*Dornakal*

N. D. ANANDA RAO SAMUEL



*The fundamental import of the Christian scriptures is that they record the story of Jesus. They enable us to get into touch with the historic manifestation of the Divine. It is true only the four Gospels narrate the life of Jesus. But these Gospels are to the Bible what the keystone is to the arch. The whole structure rests upon the keystone. Take the Gospels away and the massive edifice of Christian revelation tumbles down immediately.*



*In all men there is a capacity to see goodness and to follow it though in some it is obscured by training or innate darkness. This inner capacity to see and to recognize goodness is the work of the Logos. Let no one who believes in an historical revelation deny to others any such capacity.*



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